

Visual Methodologies and Photographic Practices:

Encounters with Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site

Introduction

Many people, both individuals and organisations, are involved with Hadrian's Wall, including policy makers, management practitioners, small businesses, residents, and of course tourists. How people perceive Hadrian's Wall will depend on their relationship with the Wall and the surrounding area and thus they will have individual experiences of living, working and visiting the Wall. Photo-elicitation methods allow the participant to describe the significance of Hadrian's Wall and their personal expectations, experiences and encounters, thus creating a narrative through the presentation of their own photographs. The visual methodology will facilitate exploration into how people approach taking photographs and how they responded to taking photographs as part of this research, creating a typology of photographic practices.

Hadrian's Wall is an iconic historical landscape and as such it is important for tourism in northern England. It is unique for its archaeology and international heritage, hence its World Heritage Site status since 1987. The Wall crosses the north of England from Wallsend (just outside Newcastle upon Tyne) in the east to Bowness on Solway in the

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west. Hadrian's Wall was built in AD122 under the orders of the Roman Emperor Hadrian and took approximately ten years to complete. It has disappeared in some places, either under buildings, beneath roads, or recycled to construct later buildings in the vicinity of the Wall such as Lanercost Priory in Brampton, Cumbria.

Hadrian's Wall is inherently linked to history and archaeology and this is one of the main reasons for people visiting the area. However, the landscape of Hadrian's Wall is also central to its appeal as a tourist destination. The Wall runs through (amongst other things) spectacular countryside, urban conurbations and industrial landscapes. The central section of the Wall is probably considered the most dramatic, with the Wall running along the top of the Whin Sill scarp. This is also the most visited section and is very popular in representations and images of the Wall for the promotion of the area.

This paper discusses a typology of photographic approaches and practices that has been constructed as a result of this study. Due to the individual and changing nature of experience, Sharpley (1999) warns against creating a typology of tourists, suggesting that a typology is static in space and time. This paper, however, looks at how people approached taking part in the research and a typology has been created to illustrate the many ways that people, tourists, residents and workers, took photographs of Hadrian's Wall. A typology is a useful way of summarising the ways that people approached this research and should not be seen as a definitive guide to people's photographic

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motivations. As Suvantola (2002: 63) states "typologies describe practices rather than types of people".

Methodology

Using images in this research

There are many ways of using visual data, in this case photographs, within the research process. In its simplest form photo-elicitation is a technique whereby photographs are used within an interview to reveal further understanding of the interviewee's opinions than by interview alone. Traditionally, the photographs used in photo-elicitation have been those produced by the researcher. However, they still have the capacity to encourage and increase collaboration between the researcher and the researched. Douglas Harper's (1987) *Working Knowledge: Skill and Community in a small shop* is a good example of how using photo-elicitation can be used to great effect in a collaborative study with the participant.

This research uses a combination of reflexive photography¹ (or auto-photography, see Cook and Crang, 1995) and the photo novella² (Hurworth, 2003). The technique, similar to that used by Beilin (2005), is designed to enable participants to create a narrative of their experience of Hadrian's Wall through visual representation by encouraging participants to 'talk through' their photographs by either putting them into themes and

¹ A technique whereby the respondent takes the photographs and then describes the meanings behind them.

² A method of photo-interviewing whereby participants construct a narrative from photographs that they have taken to describe their everyday experiences and explain the significance behind the pictures.

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categories of their choice or provide an account of why they took the photos they did, whatever method they were most comfortable doing. Putting the photographs in themes and categories helped to define what the participant experienced and what their perceptions were of Hadrian's Wall. Thus, the interviews were driven by the participants: they were free to decide how they wanted to proceed with the interview and what they talked about (Heisley and Levy, 1991).

Distributing cameras and using participant generated photographs gave respondents the opportunity to get involved in the research. This offered more power and depth of thought to the participant than interviewing alone. The research created active participants. It was participant's personal experiences of Hadrian's Wall; through their own eyes and in their own words. As Pink (2001: 28) states, it was an opportunity to display "different types of knowledge and intentionality for the photographer". It was also a way for participants to express and inform their opinions and produce collaborative knowledge (Pink, 2006). Furthermore, the methodology forces the researcher (and the participants) to be reflexive which in turn generates a richness of interview and depth and understanding through the presentation of the produced image.

Using disposable cameras

Participants were not using their own camera, but consciously using a disposable supplied to them for research purposes. One argument is that participants should have used their own camera. This would have changed the nature of the research for several

reasons. Firstly, by using a disposable camera, participants were limited to a maximum of 27 pictures. Secondly, if selecting pictures from a digital source the participant would be more likely to choose pictures for their aesthetic value when the object of the research is to discuss experiences and encounters. Hence, whilst the disposable camera is technically limited it produces a snapshot in time that cannot be altered. The picture-taker has consciously taken the photos knowing they were going to discuss it at a later date. They may have had an initial idea what they were going to discuss when they took the photo, or they may have thought about it on receipt of the photographs. However, this does not mean that people did not take pictures for their aesthetic value. By looking through the lens they are considering a possible vision. The dramatic landscapes of the central section of the Wall lend themselves to 'picture postcard' photographs. Thirdly, there could have been even less direct contact with participants if the photos were digital and whilst this may not necessarily be a negative point, the change in dynamics would have altered the research. The direct contact aided my research, by talking face to face with participants I was able to convey to them the purpose of the research and distribute the camera, thus they had a point of personal contact. Finally, not everyone has, or has access to, a digital camera: participation in the research was accessible to all those who were willing (Beckley *et al*, 2007).

Camera distribution

All participants were provided with a disposable camera and asked to take photographs of their experience of Hadrian's Wall. Each participant was given the same instruction:

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"take photographs of your choice about your experience of the Wall". If they asked "anything in particular?", the answer was "no, anything you like that represents your experience of Hadrian's Wall". This also included the number of photos taken; they were not required to complete the film if they did not wish to. If they agreed to take part by taking photos and then agreeing to talk about their photographs at a later date they were given a camera with a stamped addressed envelope and their contact details taken. Each camera was numbered so that when it was returned the participant could be identified. This number is used in the analysis of the data as a means of identification within the discourse. The participants were not given any time limit in which to take their photographs. This depended on them and their link with Hadrian's Wall. Visitors on a day trip obviously had a time limit, others were more flexible. The time span of picture taking was between two days and six months.

The photo-interviews

The photo-interviews were in two parts, with the first part led by the interviewee talking through their photos, as discussed above. The second part of the interview is the focus of the discussion here. In this part of the interview participants were asked explicitly about the process of: taking the photos; taking part in the research; how they approached taking the photographs; and why they took the pictures that they did. Some of these questions prompted further open discussion by a number of participants. As Pink (2001: 68) suggests "ethnographers should be interested in how informants use the content of the images as vessels in which to invest meanings and through which to produce and

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represent their knowledge, self-identities, experiences and emotions". Thus, one question that was asked of all participants was about the process of taking the photographs and how they felt about taking part in this research.

The aim is an explanation of people's reactions and encounters using photographs taken by people rather than photographs of people. However, it is thought here that whilst some of the photographs taken by participants may on the surface seem to be very similar, the meanings and values for that image contrast widely (Harper, 1994). The photograph is very personal to the individual but also requires a verbal narrative to add depth to its meaning. Without an individual's explanation about the reason and importance of an image to them, it is completely open to interpretation by the viewer (Albers and James, 1988). Lippard (1997: 55) suggested that "The snapshot is the personal photographic equivalent (or support) of the local narrative." However, this local narrative needs the accompanying words to put it in context.

Discussion

Participants' approach to taking the photographs varied widely. This was expected. Some people said that they took similar pictures to those that they would normally do, others took pictures of an object or structure, others wanted to convey a specific agenda to the researcher and some took them for aesthetic reasons. Most were a combination of all these with differing emphases. It may seem like an obvious point to make, but the pictures taken by participants were also dependent on locational factors such as where

they were given the camera, where they were visiting, or where they live or work. Also, if a visitor, the duration of their stay. One thing all the photographs have in common, whatever the subject, is that they were all personal to the taker. It should be noted that even though efforts were made to minimise any influence by the researcher, that influence cannot be ignored. Although participants were left to decide for themselves what they wanted to take pictures of, they were inevitably influenced by the research and the researcher in some way. From the time when they were given the camera they became part of the research. They were aware that they were part of a study and this has ultimately influenced their photographs. However, people did take pictures of what mattered to them regarding their encounter with the Wall, photos of things they would have been inclined to take regardless of the research, with one specific difference. They were aware that they would be talking to me about why they took the photos at a later date (Beckley *et al*, 2007).

Photographic practices

People's motivations are rarely one dimensional: they usually have several overlapping reasons or perceptions of events, details and ideas. This section categorises participants photographic practices accepting that, on most occasions, these were varied and for several different reasons. As discussed above, the construction of a typology is to describe the practices of photo-taking in this research rather than describe the types of people that participated (Suvantola, 2002). The broad categories that have been

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generated are summarised in a Table 1 below, followed by a short explanation of each approach.

Table 1: Typology of photographic practices.

Approach	Description
Sharing knowledge and local knowledge	A participant keen to share their knowledge through seeking out both the unusual and everyday aspects of the place that might not be experienced by the 'average' visitor.
Family album	Taking photos of the family, putting themselves in the picture, locating themselves in place to 'record days out': the family gaze.
Happy snapper	The participant took the photos as quickly as possible, with lots of pictures taken on the same day, mostly of limited range.
Reproducer	Participant who is reproducing a picture that they have already seen, either professionally or otherwise. Prior production reinforces the idea that this is a legitimate photograph to take and take away.
Sightseer	Tourist on holiday taking photos of the landscape or site that they are visiting to keep for posterity, or as C18 said: "It helps me remember what it felt like to visit a place."
Documentary: Routine and Management (functional)	This encompasses a wide range of managers who took photos to reflect such things as management issues, practical management and monitoring of areas and sites for management purposes; pictures from a work point of view.
Archivist	The participant took photos to record the landscape, any changes to that landscape and points of particular interest that the photo-taker wanted to document.
Photographic technicality and composition	Emphasis here was on photographic merit; the aesthetic of the photograph.
Direct response to research/researcher	C29 "Well I tried to think of what would be of interest to you because of what you are studying."

Sharing knowledge

C14³ works at a site along the Wall. He came to work on Hadrian's Wall six years ago by accident, "I never really settled in any one job", but now considers the preservation of the Wall to be more important than earning his living:

"Preservation then education and the job definitely comes last it really does [...] the employment side of things, it's important to me obviously because it's a job but it's not the be all and end all, and if I was to lose this job through some of the, for whatever reason, this might close down or something like that, the preservation would be more important than me being able to work here, that's basically it."

He explained his approach to taking the photos:

"[T]he day I took the shots at Housesteads I tried to look at things from a different point of view for most of it, some of it I knew was going to be personal, the shots along the milecastle etcetera, they were personal to me because I happen to love that particular view. Erm some of the other shots were 'I know I'm going to take this photograph because it's a hidden piece that people don't tend to see' so that was why I took those shots. Some of

³ This is a participant in the research: it refers to the number of the camera that they were given, so that they remain anonymous in the text but are identifiable to the researcher.

them were opportunistic, the gate across the hole in the Wall, and I think you can probably say that for pretty well all the shots I took. [pause] [...]

But there are a handful of shots in there where I was trying to see things from somebody's eyes other than my own, or as if it was the first time I'd been here."

C14 said that he thought about what he was going to take pictures of before he used the camera and said "I sort of viewed it, it was an opportunity for me to put something back, to be able to express to somebody else, almost like a fellow colleague as it were, why I do what I do and why I enjoy doing what I do". C14 considered the taking of photographs as a way of explaining to an associate why he does his job, what makes it special, why he continues to do it and things that he is passionate about. It was an attitude of sharing his continuing knowledge of the Wall with someone, things about the site that a regular visitor would not know. C14 believes that it is through sharing this knowledge that he can most influence the future of Hadrian's Wall and sites like it, encouraging others to appreciate it and to get involved. He explained:

"I've left this one [photo category 'education'] until last, quite accidentally, education as far as the Wall itself is concerned is very important [...] education to me means not just telling the kids what the Romans did 2000 years ago, it's telling the kids what the Romans did 2000 years ago and then what we have left is important and what we have

left has to be maintained and hopefully some of these children will grow up to follow my example as it were and get jobs within that umbrella, be it archaeology, be it on the sites like these or whatever.”

C14 displayed a genuine affection and affinity for Hadrian's Wall and used the photographs to illustrate both personal and professional meanings of the Wall to him. The importance of sharing his knowledge of the Wall with visitors (including the researcher) was evident, with his approach to this being almost an ambassadorial role.

Local knowledge

C08 is a volunteer on the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail. As part of their work the volunteers take photographs of their allocated part of the Trail for monitoring purposes. They also take photographs of anything that is wrong along the Trail so that it can be addressed, “if we've taken a photograph of some erosion or something that's happening we'll send those off”. Thus C08 could also be an example of documentary photo-taking which is addressed below. These two categories are closely linked: those involved in the management of the Wall displayed high levels of local knowledge. C08 is also an amateur photographer and said about Hadrian's Wall:

“I've been taking lots in the sense of just the views and the lighting because it's just different every time you go. I've noticed nearly all of my

photographs are looking east and I realised that was because obviously by the time we get up there the sun is over that way and the lighting.”

C08 demonstrates great insight into the area where she lives and volunteers. Her photos are of more unusual shots of the Wall, of known locations taken from diverse angles (Plate 1). They show changing light and atmosphere that is only possible if you are a regular visitor to the Wall, at different times of day and throughout the year: “I hadn't realised until I moved here that the sky could be so many different shades of blue at the same time”.

Family album

C15 was a visitor to the site where C14 works. She said that her approach to taking the photos was no different to usual “it was just normal pictures for us”. However, she then went on to admit “We were worried, that's why we started taking some without anybody on because we thought I wonder if she really wants them all with us on! [...] I'm afraid to say we prefer the pictures of our children!” (Plate 2). This reveals that C15 and her family were not only conscious that they were taking pictures for the researcher, but also that the importance for her is capturing moments of her family in place rather than the place itself, and to then keep these as memories: “I mean I've got scrapbooks that I will put this into now”. C15 took photographs that concentrated on the family in the location rather than taking pictures of the destination itself. This is what Haldrup and Larsen

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(2003) call the family gaze. The photographs produced become a tangible memory for the future and are representative of public and private family relationships.

Happy snapper

C33 was one of the participants who explicitly admitted: "I'm a happy snapper me, but I think I sort of thought about what I was doing before I did it, you know, took them for specific reasons [...] but I took them quickly". Whilst C33 did take a lot of pictures of similar things on the same day, she had also taken time to think about what she wanted to convey about her experience of living and volunteering in the World Heritage Site. She took a relaxed approach to taking the pictures.

C25's photographic experience was more implicit; the photographs told a story of their own. C25 took only 12 pictures and it was evident that they had all been taken on the same day, in a short period of time. Whilst C25 may not have explicitly stated this in the interview, the photographs were all of her view at one point in time from her farmhouse door. Lack of time could be a major factor in this, as she rarely gets to leave her thriving Bed and Breakfast business: "I just have no time [...] At the end of the day what am I working for, I can't do anything, I can't go anywhere [...] I've never walked this Wall, but I feel like I have because all the visitors tell me all about it". However, C25's photos are still representative of her experience of living along Hadrian's Wall. They show that she rarely gets any time to herself because she is too busy catering for visitors to the Wall and that her knowledge of the Wall is built by visitor experiences.

Reproducer

Whilst C22 said that taking the photos was “part of my everyday routine” (see Documentary: Routine and Management below) his pictures also included familiar sights/sites along the Wall. People take pictures of familiar places and objects as reference points (Relph, 1976). For example in the central section of the Wall the nicks and gaps in the landscape lend themselves to be photographed and with milecastle 39 in one of these gaps it frames a good photograph of both the landscape and the monument (Plate 3). C22 also took a photograph of Sycamore Gap. This is featured on promotional material for the Wall and has become famous for its connection to Hollywood and the 1991 Kevin Costner film ‘Robin Hood Prince of Thieves’. C22 said of it: “This picture, you’re probably sick of the sight of them ones!” He took the photo so that he could explain the problems that the National Park Authority have with tourists stopping on the military road to take a picture of the tree (Plate 4). In fact, only two other participants took a picture of Sycamore Gap. C38, a visitor and volunteer, explained the symbolic importance of taking a photo of Sycamore Gap:

“It’s Sycamore Gap, or as me and my son keep saying Costner’s Gap because that’s where Prince of Thieves, when Robin Hood came he got off his boat didn’t he, climbed over the white cliffs of Dover or something then strode to Hadrian’s Wall very quickly and then carried on to Nottingham! [...] And every time we look back and say ‘there’s Costner’s

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Gap we've got to go there' and this year we actually went to it, because I got some really good pictures of Sycamore gap. So that's what that is, it's a pretty non-picture but actually it means a lot the fact that it's Costner's Gap." (Plate 5)

These 'reproducer' photographs are good examples of how memories are created based on conspicuous consumption, the taker has been to the place that is familiar through promotion and photographic representation of place. The central section of the Wall, particularly between Housesteads and Steel Rigg was the place that encouraged people to take familiar images of the landscape. None of the visitors explicitly admitted that they had taken images that they were familiar with from other sources. Images of a place are socially constructed and used in tourism marketing to create a specific image of place that influences tourists not only in choice of destination but also, consciously or not, with some of the photographs they take themselves (Gali Espelt and Donaire Benito, 2005).

Plate 1: "I had to include it (twice in fact). Such a hard place to photograph (the best place is from the road but there are no stopping places and no path) and you need the

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lighting just right to make it look good. At other times from this point you wouldn't even notice it." (C08)



Source: C08

Plate 2: "[O]ne of the more boring ones" (C15)



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Source: C15

Plate 3: "This is Milecastle 39 just along from Sycamore Gap the tree." (C22)



Source: C22

Plate 4: "[Y]ou're probably sick of the sight of them ones!" (C22)

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Source: C22

Plate 5: "[I]t's a pretty non-picture but actually it means a lot the fact that it's Costner's Gap."(C38)



Source: C38

Sightseer

C41 put his photos into eight categories, in priority order. The most significant pictures were of the site that he visited (Vindolanda) and the scale of the site, the 'work in progress' - the excavations, and the bath houses which hold a personal interest for him (Plate 6). C41 said that he took the sort of photographs that he would normally take. However his analysis of them shows the impact that the research had on him, reflecting on his experience of a family visit to the Wall:

"I just took the sort of pictures I would normally take and looking at these as a collection, you know my wife and daughter probably sort of thought 'oh no it's Dad again with his camera again taking landscapes and any old bit of rubbish!' and then a bit of interest because when I go round these sites, you know, the things that interest me are completely different to what [my wife and daughter] find interesting."

So C41 took similar pictures to what he normally would on a family holiday but by taking part in the research he revealed a heightened level of reflexivity as to how and why he had taken the photos and more significant for him personally, a reflective view of their holiday experience at Hadrian's Wall.

Documentary: Routine and Management

The condition of the footpaths and general wear and tear on the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail and the Hadrian's Wall landscape is monitored using fixed point photographs. Also, some of the managers and National Trail volunteers monitor their own section of the Wall using photographic data (discussed above in local knowledge). This had an impact on the way they approached taking photos for the research. For instance the National Park rangers routinely take photographs for monitoring and management purposes. Whilst those spoken to said that they took some pictures with the research in mind, one of them also explained the day to day importance of photographic data for their work:

“We carry cameras with us, [another ranger] carries one, I carry one, and just it always has been, I mean I'm a keen photographer so I've always had a camera with us. [...] what you asked us, me and [another ranger] to do, is what we're doing all the time anyway so it wasn't as if I had to go out there and take pictures of this, this and this because its part of my everyday routine.” (C22)

For others who are involved in practical work along the Wall⁴ taking photographs of their experience of Hadrian's Wall was a bit more difficult for several reasons: they forgot to take the camera out, they had their hands full working and were unable to take a

⁴ For example, a farmer, a Bed and Breakfast provider, an English Heritage employee, a National Trust employee.

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photograph, or the type of work that they do. For example when C23 was asked how she approached taking the photos she said:

“I suppose what happened was like when loading the wool I thought ‘oh I must take that camera and do something with that camera’ [laughs] and because all I was doing was doing the scribing [for the wool bales] you know I could easily manage it, not like I had my hands dirty, all I had was a pen and a clipboard and so having got that far you sort of, well just try and pick something that looks like you’ll get it in the picture.” (Plate 7)

When asked what photos were the most significant she replied “What isn’t there really is working with the sheep, which is what I spend more time doing, but I didn’t take because I was working with the sheep! [laughs]”

Plate 6: “I don’t know why bath houses fascinate me but this idea of having heating under the floor is probably something from my school days, but what fascinates me about these places is around the technology” (C41)

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Source: C41

Plate 7: “[L]oading them [the wool bags] up onto the wagon to take them into the wool board in Carlisle” (C23)



Source: C23

Archivist

C44 was visiting Vindolanda and Housesteads with his wife and 13 year old grandson. He is in his early seventies, a retired accountant and has been visiting Hadrian's Wall for over 50 years, beginning with a sixth-form school trip. His is an amateur historian and is the chair of a local history society. His pictures were taken with his historical interests in mind, were not prioritised and he had only taken 12 pictures, for which he offered an explanation: the family had spent longer at Vindolanda than they anticipated and unfortunately this left little time at Housesteads. To add to this, C44 forgot and left the camera in the car, remembering when he was half way up the hill to the fort and because of time restrictions on their visit, did not go back and get it. C44 explained his choice of shots:

"I am taking it trying to capture the historical impact of the site as well as a geographic one. In general I don't take family portraits I tend to take things because it's something of interest that I want to be able to remember, it's the thing that triggers my memory then, but also I take photographs of things sometimes I don't quite understand so I can find someone and say what do you think about this. [...] In those circumstances I would take several shots of that from different angles, measure it up and then find someone who might be able to satisfy my curiosity. [...] Because most people take photographs to provide, to stimulate their memory at a future date but I was also taking, had I been, I

would have brought those back with me and I will do anyway during this next 10 weeks when we're on this [historical debating society] and we're talking about after the Romans, you know I may well flash one or two of these there." (Plate 8)

Photographic technicality and composition

Two participants in particular reviewed their photographs in terms of their composition: C12 and C16. They demonstrated this to differing degrees. C12 showed a good deal of understanding of the research and expressed his thoughts and perceptions of living along the Wall. C16 illustrated a much more technical approach to taking his pictures even though he was using a point and shoot disposable camera.

C16 explained his reasons for taking the photographs were two-fold: pictures of the Roman engineering and structure, what he referred to as "architectural images" and the photographic composition of these photos. All but one of his eight categories of photos centred on "architectural images". The other category was number four in his prioritised list and titled "landscape/setting" which he had chosen "to show the areas in which the sites were built", thus it was still linked to his ideas about engineering and structures. C16 could also be described as an archivist. He took pictures of what interested him, the structures at sites, and used his knowledge of photography to frame the pictures and

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explain to the researcher his thoughts on the successfulness of the composition of the photo (Plate 9).

C12 revealed that, being an amateur photographer, he was wary of using the camera and he compared how he normally takes pictures to how he approached the research and when I asked him about how he felt taking the pictures he replied:

“Well I think there was something about the fact that it wasn't my camera and, you know, I've got posh cameras so because it wasn't my camera I didn't know what it would do. I use digital, so I think what I usually do and I take photographs [clicks fingers to illustrate constant picture taking] when I'm sparked by something but I think I felt a sense of 'oh I've got to use this' so it wasn't as spontaneous as it might have been and if I was going to take one camera out I wouldn't have taken this one, if you know what I mean! So in a way I think if I hadn't have been a person that took photographs that would have been a much more effective tool than it has been if you know what I mean.”

So, C12 thought that the fact that he regularly takes photographs with a high specification digital camera was a disadvantage to the research. What would he have produced if he had used his own camera, what sort of pictures would he have selected, would they have been more creative, because as he states below, for him, being involved in the research

concerned communication and response rather than aesthetics. He then went on to say how he was surprised at the quality of the photos that the disposable camera produced and that the most notable part of the research for him was the process of thinking about and taking part in a reflective study of this kind:

“I didn't know what [the camera] would do, I didn't think it would take as good photographs as it has, I take pictures with a different camera. But I think the whole thing of you and me, us talking at the Wall conference⁵, and then the photographs and then you know me thinking about it and then this meeting we've had. I've found that helpful just in terms of making me more aware of the place and I think that I'm more aware. So there was something about, I think that because it wasn't going to be the aesthetic value of these pictures that is important there was something about being used to illustrate something, trying to capture something almost behaviourally rather than aesthetically, if you know what I mean, and that was an interesting way of thinking about taking pictures, in order to communicate something. So I was aware that I have a luxury when I take my own pictures that they are just for me [chuckles] I take what I like and I don't care if no-one else knows what they're about [laughs].”

⁵ We initially met in April 2006 at the 'Writing on the Wall' Conference which was a culmination of a five year creative writing project for Hadrian's Wall.

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This illustrates the personal implications for C12 about taking photographs. For him, photos have both a material and a symbolic value. He revealed that for him taking photographs is a private pastime and that he takes pictures for himself without thought of explaining them to someone else. This is in contrast to Gotham's (2002) ideas about displaying status and capital through conspicuous consumption; however, it is still the accumulation of cultural capital. C12 is more used to sharing his thoughts through his poetry and it was a novelty for him to share his photographic meanings with me.

Direct response to research

Two participants, C11 and C29, admitted that they took photographs with the research or the researcher directly in mind. C11 was walking the National Trail with a friend for charity and was given a camera at Segedunum. He took 28 photographs of various places along the Wall, including the Vallum⁶, the Wall, and associated ruins such as milecastles, turrets and the mithraic temple at Brocolitia, along with pictures of the landscape. Five of his photos were of interpretation boards along the Wall to locate themselves in place for the researcher. He admitted that he took photos of "All the places that we thought would interest you".

⁶ In fact, C11 was the only other participant, apart from C14 that took pictures (2) of the Vallum, the earthwork rather than Hadrian's Wall or other brick structures associated with the Wall.

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Plate 8: "I am taking it trying to capture the historical impact of the site as well as a geographic one." (C44)



Source: C44

Plate 9: "I like the way the eye is channelled towards the background." (C16)

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Source: C16

Summary

The reflexive nature of this visual research method is an effective way for participants to contemplate their experiences and then build a narrative about their encounters with Hadrian's Wall. For some, for example C12, their attachment became clearer and stronger through this reflection (Beckley *et al*, 2007). By using the photograph, a material object, as a prompt, participants are able to lead the interview and discuss in depth their experiences and knowledge behind and around the image. Photographs can link people together and create memories, both shared and personal and can trigger forgotten thoughts. Further, from the discourses of participants talking about their experiences it is possible to construct a typology of how people approached and took

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photographs for this research (Table 1). Most participants' photographs could be categorised in more than one style. However, although all photographs taken were to a certain extent personal to the taker, participants were conscious that they were to be discussed at a later date with the researcher to convey their experience of Hadrian's Wall. It is evident that, although response rates were good, levels of involvement in the research varied widely. However, even the sightseer disclosed that through using the visual, or the gaze, it is possible to evoke other feelings by engaging with the image, and reflecting on the practice of taking that photograph. It was the narratives accompanying the pictures that revealed the embodied encounter with Hadrian's Wall.

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